

Washington, D.C. - Today, Congressman Ben Ray Luján voted for legislation that will spur job creation in the new clean energy industry and strengthen rural economies that have been hit hard by the economic crisis. The Rural Energy Savings Act, or "Rural Star," will enable rural electric cooperatives to provide loans to families in rural communities to improve their energy efficiency and lower their utility bills, while creating American manufacturing and installation jobs.

"New Mexico's rural electric cooperatives provide energy to thousands of homes in rural areas across New Mexico," said Congressman Luján. "This legislation will allow rural electric cooperatives to help their member consumers cover the initial costs of energy upgrades to their homes. I am proud to support this legislation which will create jobs for rural communities in New Mexico and give our families the tools they need to make their homes more energy efficient."

"The Rural Energy Savings Program Act will allow co-op member consumers to lower their energy bills through greater efficiencies. The Act is a reasonable way to assist co-op members in these hard economic times. This will also create sorely needed rural jobs" said Keven Groenewold, Executive Vice President and General Manager of the New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "We worked very closely with Congressman Luján and appreciate his support of this bill."

This legislation offers a number of beneficial programs for homeowners, including homeowner loans of approximately \$3,000 to \$7,500 to eliminate the upfront cost of home energy upgrades. Over 90% of typical materials used are made in America, so the Rural Star and Loan Star programs in this bill will boost demand for American made energy efficient products and materials, along with increased demand for construction and installation services.

Congressman Luján is a cosponsor of the legislation.